

## ***SUPPORTING OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD***

The United States Air Force Museum does more than operate the world's largest military aviation museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Out of view from the many visitors, the United States Air Force Museum also supports nearly 360 historical facilities around the world.

Within the U.S. Air Force, those include 13 Air Force field museums and 243 other historical displays of aircraft and artifacts. Outside the USAF, there are 13 other Department of Defense museums, 75 U.S. civilian museums and 25 foreign civilian museums.

Prior to 1976, the United States Air Force Museum Program only consisted of the national United States Air Force Museum and six satellite museums. Since then, its growth has been accelerated by two factors. During the past decade, a wave of aviation nostalgia prompted the creation of the many field museums, and during the same period, the United States Air Force Museum developed a coherent system for tracking historical artifacts that remain scattered throughout the service.

Over 26,000 items of U.S. Air Force historical property are on loan to other museums and exhibits in the U.S. and abroad. Another 6,000 are on display at the

United States Air Force Museum and about 36,000 are stored at the main facility at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Almost 2,000 aircraft and missiles are included in these figures, of which more than 1,800 are on loan to other museums. The task of harmonizing this loan operation rests primarily with the United States Air Force Museum's Collection Management Division. The staff maintains inventory of this vast collection, receiving and shipping items to museums and air parks around the world. On-site guidance is also provided by United States Air Force Museum Plans and Programs staff.

Acquiring aircraft as well as other artifacts which represent the material heritage of the U.S. Air Force is done through an established collection policy and U.S. Air Force operating instructions. Significant aircraft still in operation are identified by the United States Air Force Museum and earmarked for later acquisition, through permission of the Secretary of the Air Force. Once an aircraft is declared excess to Air Force requirements, the process of transferring it to Museum collection begins. Private individuals also donate aircraft to the United States Air Force Museum. The Museum is authorized to trade items of excess for significant aircraft or artifacts that would help complete the collection.